

AUG 15 1977

Columbia University in the City of New York | New York, N.Y. 10027

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Fayerweather Hall

12 August 1977

Dear Josh,

You are too much. Do you really follow the SOUTH AFRICAN JOURNAL OF SCIENCE or do you have an ASCA topic on integrity? Anyway, the Craib story is one worth looking into. I have written the journal to find out about the "Society for Truth and Honour in Scientific Publication" and will let you know when I hear. (It sounds suspiciously like a Star Chamber.)

On Neal Miller and di Cara: I just came across mention of the case the day before I got your note. Don Campbell sent me his James lectures -- worth reading anyway -- and in the last he mentions what I take to be the case you mentioned. I will be seeing Campbell soon and will ask him. Obviously, Neal Miller would know the most but I don't have the courage to ask him. It has to be an agonizing story.

On your ~~per~~ review ruminations: Obviously there is a lot of sociology captured in your remarks. I have passed them on to Steve and Jon. Your sense that egalitarianism has led to a new competitiveness (and in our field, I think, such low ratings that nothing gets funded) should be amenable to empirical test. As I understood you, you were making a historical statement but Jon and Steve could look at the ratings proposals receive from those in a position of career security and those who are insecure. The analysis might parallel what Bob and I did for the Physical Review where we tried to detect the occurrence of three patterns: status envy, status subordination and status patronage (guess where the terms came from). But physicists being what they were then (or the PRs referee choices being what they were) we found that regardless of the status configuration of referees and submitters, about the same proportion of papers were rejected. I wonder how it is at NSF now. Anyway, one of the more salutary outcomes of our NSF episode is that Jon and Steve are far more cynical about the workings of the system. They tell me that their report will be much influenced by our experience -- e.g. when a very large number of outsiders reviewers are used, the chances of dispersion in the ratings should be increased and therefore the average ratings should decrease; -- e.g. they also suddenly became aware of the fact that the outside reviewers' comments are not routinely shown to the panel members but are read from by the program directors selectively! -- e.g. the decision review committee reviews just 2% of rejections. Obviously NSF is more concerned with making errors of commission but should

it be?

The Minutes of the Editorial Affairs Committee of Annual Reviews arrived. I am somewhat concerned with the item on the AR of Sociology. It does sound as if the project might be scrapped which would, I think, really be bad for the field and would seriously affect the possibility of starting a review publication up again later. I suspect that the troubles are largely managerial -- (editorial) at least the complaints of default and quality control. As for declining sales, that seems endemic. It seems to me that much more work has to be done to convince the ASA executive officer that AR is important and the best way to do that is through the editor(s) along with Bill K. We have a new executive officer coming into office (I haven't heard who it is) but this may be the time to move. I would think it would be sensible to wait and see how things work out on the ~~managem~~ editorial side before doing anything precipitous.

Gene Garfield stopped by and we talked some about the Humanities and Arts Citation Index. Bob M and I both think that the humanists may use the HCI differently from scientists and that Gene might consider something like a comparative study of patterns of use in order to improve the format and make it more effective for humanists. They after all are apt to be fairly hostile to the mechanization of scholarship and some response to that seems in order.

Best -----

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